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3/10/91

Dear Hal,

This letter is really for Mark Hertzgaard but I have no San Francisco phone book.

I'm at page 321 of the Schocken edition of his excellent On Bended Knee.

There and elsewhere he refers to Meese's press conference vice Reagan November 25.

He says also that Meese lied, as he did. But Hertzgaard and all others of whom I know missed Meese's very biggest and controlling lie. He explained that the FBI had not conducted any investigation because, as he put it, civil-libertarian that he is, to investigate government employees without any reason to suspect a crime would be wrong.

And this failure, if not refusal, to send the FBI in is what gave Oliver North and others the time to shred all the evidence.

In fact, as Meese and the FBI knew very well, there is specific provision for non-criminal investigations at the president's request. The monster JFK assassination investigation, which they at least called it,was just such a non-criminal investigation.

I cite the best source in the world, the FBI's founding father, J. Edgar Hoover, his Warren Commission testimony, 5H98, attached.

In any president ever needed such and investigation, assuming his innocence, of course, it was Reagan.

The book is about the press and the Reagan administration. I kept no record of the papers and correspondents to whom I sent these pages along with a letter but I did call it to the attention of many. Not one story appeared.

Ditto for the Congress, a few in both Houses.

For his information and in the event of any other reprinting, I'd appreciate it if you would please get this to him. Along with my appreciate for an excellent and very worthwhile book.

We are, for us, OK. I'll be 78 is 30 days, not now 29 days.

Thanks and our best,

Hal

Harold Weisberg

Mr. RANKIN will carry on the examination, Mr. Director.

Mr. RANKIN. Mr. Chief Justice, do you want to tell him briefly what our purpose is?

The CHAIRMAN. Oh, yes; it is our practice to make a brief statement before the testimony of each witness, and I will do it now.

Mr. Hoover will be asked to testify in regard to whether Lee H. Oswald was ever an agent, directly or indirectly, or an informer or acting on behalf of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in any capacity at any time, and whether he knows of any credible evidence of any conspiracy, either domestic or foreign, involved in the assassination of President Kennedy.

What he has to say about an article in the National Enquirer, Commission Exhibit No. 837, and concerning the failure to include the name and information concerning special agent Hosty in the initial report of the Oswald address book and any suggestions and recommendations he may have concerning improvements or changes in provisions for the protection of the President of the United States. Now, Mr. Rankin, you may proceed.

Mr. RANKIN. Mr. Hoover, will you state for the record your name and position?

Mr. HOOVER. J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the Department of Justice.

Mr. RANKIN. Where do you live, Mr. Hoover?

Mr. HOOVER. I live at 4936 30th Place, Northwest, Washington, D.C.

Mr. RANKIN. And you have been Director of the Bureau for some 40 years according to the newspapers?

Mr. HOOVER. That is correct; since 1924.

Mr. RANKIN. You have furnished us a considerable amount of information, Mr. Hoover, about whether or not Lee Harvey Oswald was ever an agent or acting for the Bureau in any capacity as informer or otherwise at any time. Are those statements correct?

Mr. HOOVER. They are correct. I can most emphatically say that at no time was he ever an employee of the Bureau in any capacity, either as an agent or as a special employee, or as an informant.

Mr. RANKIN. I call your particular attention to Exhibit 835, and suggest that you will find that that is your letter, together with your affidavit about this subject matter, and other matters that you furnished to us concerning this particular subject.

Mr. HOOVER. That is correct.

Mr. RANKIN. Do you wish to add anything?

Mr. HOOVER. No; there is nothing that I desire to add to what appears in this letter and my affidavit which accompanied it to the Commission.

Mr. RANKIN. You have provided many things to us in assisting the Commission in connection with this investigation and I assume, at least in a general way, you are familiar with the investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy, is that correct?

Mr. HOOVER. That is correct. When President Johnson returned to Washington he communicated with me within the first 24 hours, and asked the Bureau to pick up the investigation of the assassination because as you are aware, there is no Federal jurisdiction for such an investigation. It is not a Federal crime to kill or attack the President or the Vice President or any of the continuity of officers who would succeed to the Presidency.

However, the President has a right to request the Bureau to make special investigations, and in this instance he asked that this investigation be made. I immediately assigned a special force headed by the special agent in charge at Dallas, Tex., to initiate the investigation, and to get all details and facts concerning it, which we obtained, and then prepared a report which we submitted to the Attorney General for transmission to the President.

Mr. RANKIN. From your study of this entire matter of the assassination and work in connection with it, do you know of any credible evidence that has ever come to your attention that there was a conspiracy either foreign or domestic involved in the assassination?

any contention of that character. I have read all of the requests that have come to the Bureau from this Commission, and I have read and signed all the replies that have come to the Commission.

In addition, I have read many of the reports that our agents have made and I have been unable to find any scintilla of evidence showing any foreign conspiracy or any domestic conspiracy that culminated in the assassination of President Kennedy.

Representative FORD. May I ask this, Mr. Hoover. As I understand your testimony, it is based on the evidence that has been accumulated thus far?

Mr. HOOVER. That is correct, sir.

Representative FORD. Is the Federal Bureau of Investigation continuing its investigation of all possible ramifications of this assassination?

Mr. HOOVER. That is correct. We are receiving and we, I expect, will continue to receive for days or weeks to come, letters from individuals that normally would probably be in the category of what we would call crank letters in which various weird allegations are made or in which people have reported psychic vibrations. We are still running out letters of that character and in turn making a report to this Commission upon it, notwithstanding the fact that on the face of it the allegation is without any foundation. Individuals who could not have known any of the facts have made some very strange statements. There have been publications and books written, the contents of which have been absurd and without a scintilla of foundation of fact. I feel, from my experience in the Bureau, where we are in constant receipt over the years of these so-called crank letters, that such allegations will be going on possibly for some years to come.

I, personally, feel that any finding of the Commission will not be accepted by everybody, because there are bound to be some extremists who have very pronounced views, without any foundation for them, who will disagree violently with whatever findings the Commission makes. But I think it is essential that the FBI investigate the allegations that are received in the future so it can't be said that we had ignored them or that the case is closed and forgotten.

Representative FORD. Could you give us some idea of how many agents are currently working to one degree or another on any aspects of this case?

Mr. HOOVER. I would estimate, Congressman Ford, that there are at the present time at least 50 or 60 men giving their entire time to various aspects of the investigation, because while Dallas is the office of origin, investigation is required in auxiliary offices such as Los Angeles or San Francisco, and even in some foreign countries like Mexico. We have representatives in Mexico City.

At the outset of the investigation, following the assassination, it was the desire of the President to have this report completed by the Bureau just as quickly as possible and as thoroughly as possible, and I would say we had about 150 men at that time working on the report in the field, and at Washington, D.C.

Now, all the reports that come in from the field are, of course, reviewed at Washington by the supervisor in charge of the case, and then in turn by the assistant director of the division, and then in turn by Mr. Belmont, who is the assistant to the Director.

Reports in which there is a controversial issue or where statements have been made of the existence of some particular thing that we have never heard of before, I myself, go over these to see that we haven't missed anything or haven't had any gap in the investigation so it can be tied down.

Recently the National Enquirer had a fantastic article in it as to the existence of a letter that had been written or a request that had been made by the Department of Justice to Chief Curry of the Dallas Police Department, to withhold arresting Rubinstein, or Ruby, and Oswald after the Oswald attempt on General Walker's life.

First, I had the agent in charge at Dallas interview Chief Curry and I have sent to the Commission a letter as to what Chief Curry had to say. He branded it as an entire lie—that he had never received any request of that kind. I had our files searched to be certain we had not written any such letter as that and found we had not. I requested the Department of Justice to advise me whether they had written any such letter and Mr. Katzenbach advises there is no ref-